


**NATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES:
EQUAL TREATMENT IN HEALTH CARE REFORM
FOR PUERTO RICO**

As Congressman John Lewis has said, health care coverage is the civil rights issue of the 21st century. Accordingly, national health care reform ought to ensure that every American can obtain quality, affordable care. The undersigned organizations urge that any reform legislation ensure that the nearly four million U.S. citizens in Puerto Rico have equal access to federal and federal-state health care programs.

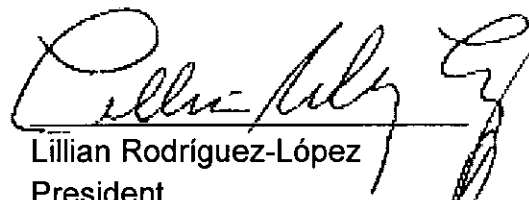
Under current law, residents of Puerto Rico are not treated equally under these programs. Right now, Puerto Rico's health care system is seriously strained because of federal funding limitations that affect patients across the health care system and place greater burdens on the territorial government than on the governments of the States. These disparities also force many Puerto Ricans to travel to the States for critical services. If the goal is to use existing programs as building blocks for reform that includes all Americans, parity for Puerto Rico in federal healthcare programs is an essential first step. President Obama has consistently advocated ending inequalities in the treatment of Puerto Rico under these programs.

In addition to the clear moral problems inherent in a health care system that treats Americans in Puerto Rico on a less-than-equal basis relative to their fellow citizens in the States, it also makes no sense from a public policy and fiscal perspective to have a system where the same U.S. citizens who receive health care are handicapped by lesser federal funding in Puerto Rico can access better-funded care merely by moving to the mainland.


For these reasons, the undersigned echo the call of all of the stakeholders in Puerto Rico's health care system in the attached Memorandum of Agreement for the Congress and the President to work together to end the current disparities in the treatment of Puerto Rico in health care programs.




Rafael Fantauzzi
President and CEO
Nat'l Puerto Rican Coalition
(NPRC)



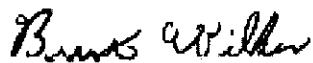
Lillian Rodríguez-López
President
Hispanic Federation



Rev. Jesse L. Jackson, Sr.
Founder and President
Rainbow PUSH Coalition



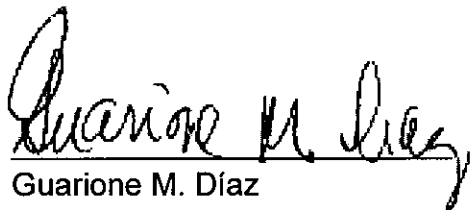
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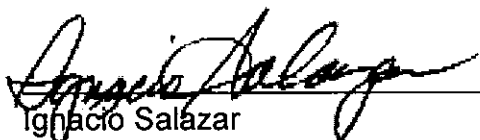
Dr. Jaime R. Torres
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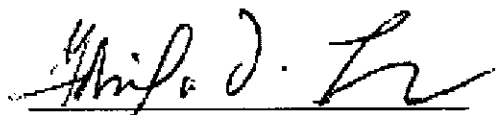
Juan Andrade, Jr.
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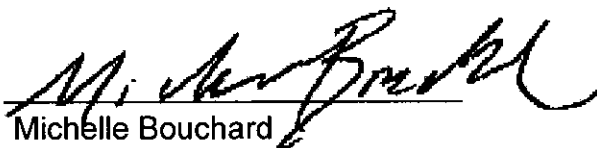
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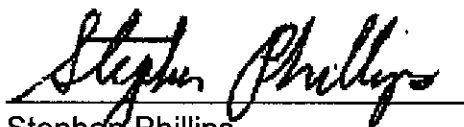
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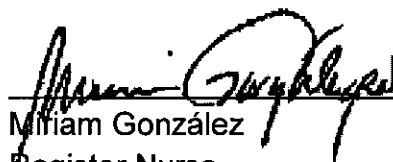
Néstor Montilla
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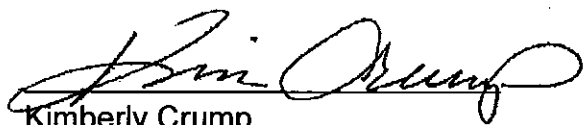
Roberto Ramírez, Esq.
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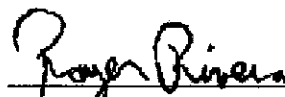
Stephen Phillips
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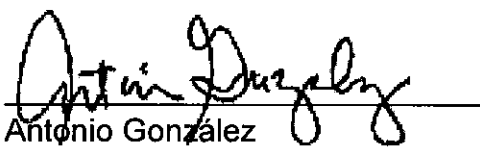
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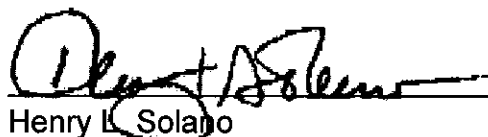
Kimberly Crump
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Roger Rivera
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Antonio González
President
William C. Velázquez Institute



Henry L. Solano
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